ADDITIONAL

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BRITISH
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Mr. Hodgson

Additional Letters.

LETTER X.

To the Opposition.

AMONG the counterpoiſes, which, either in the wiſdom of its ſtructure, or the felicity of its practice, our Conſtitution admits, may fairly be reckoned that kind of public department which is held by a conſiderable body of ex-official men, adverſe to, or, at leaſt, jealous of the perſons who compoſe the Adminiſtration. In the wiſeſt Adminiſtration there muſt be errors, in the pureſt there will be abuſes, which the ſpirit of Patriotiſm alone would hardly be excited to correct or to reform, but which the buſier and more immediate intereſt of the party called *Oppoſition* leads it to expoſe. Oppoſition holds the office of Cenſor for the public, and while it guards that liberty by which it was at firſt produced, the public will not complain of the little inconve-

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niencies it may occaſion, but rank them with the other taxes which we willingly pay for our freedom.

It is eſſential to the uſefulneſs as well as dignity of Oppoſition, that it poſſeſſes a certain degree of credit with the nation. The nation will readily enough allow it to be actuated by hopes of advancement, by proſpects of ambition; but, in general, it will be expected to hold ſentiments and language conſonant to thoſe of the people; and thoſe of the people, to do them juſtice, are generally conſonant to reaſon and to virtue. The people, indeed, are often raſh in their opinion; their blame, therefore, and their praiſe, may be ſometimes miſplaced: but the principles on which both are founded are almoſt always juſt and laudable.

For acquiring this degree of credit and confidence with the public, Oppoſition has conſiderable advantages. Beſides that general advantage which the objector always enjoys over him whoſe actions are to be criticiſed, there are incident to, and inſeparable from, the very functions of government, many circumſtances of evident unpopularity. The intereſts of the Community, for which Adminiſtration muſt provide, are too remote to overcome the feeling of that private inconvenience to which

their

their proviſion muſt ſubject individuals. In diſcuſſion or argument on their meaſures, Miniſters are fettered by many reſtraints of official prudence and official ſecrecy, to which the public, who love to conjecture and to argue, are not eaſily induced to ſubmit. The very influence and patronage which are ſuppoſed to give them ſuch advantage, if not managed with a caution and minute attention, which great talents ſometimes want, and bright ones frequently overlook, produce an effect oppoſite to what is expected from them. At any rate, the bulk of mankind are beyond their ſphere; and, with an envy natural enough, much oftener cenſure the miſapplication, than allow the propriety of miniſterial favours. The machine of government has a thouſand little com: licated movements, to which he who guides it muſt attend, of which he muſt profit by the power, or overcome the reſiſtance by means not always abſtractly right, and only juſtified by a neceſſity which the common eye is unable to perceive. From theſe and many other cauſes, which every body allows in theory, but which every body is apt to forget in practice, Oppoſition has generally had the clamour of the people in its favour. Miniſters frequently arrogate, and ſometimes obtain the ſuffrages of the more moderate

and enlightened; but the larger and louder body of the populace think it patriotiſm to murmur againſt their rulers; the unbribed bonfire and the willing huzza, are commonly on the ſide of their opponents.

If this has not been the caſe with you, it can neither be imputed to any defect of talents in yourſelves, nor to any want of opportunity in the conduct and ſituation of your adverſaries. The abilities of many among you are ſplendid n the extreme. The long and unproſperous Adminiſtration by which the American war was conducted, afforded every opening for popularity in Oppoſition, which ill ſucceſs in public meaſures, or burthens conſequently impoſed on he people, could occaſion. Yet, even then, the people were not with you. The hoſtility which your language bore to the men, though ſometimes violent and outrageous, the people would ſcarcely have reſented; but it often breathed a ſort of triumph over the diſtreſſes of your country, with which their pride and their patriotiſm were deeply offended. Your expreſſions of hoſtility to the men, the people recollected when you found it convenient to forget them; your expreſſions of hoſtility to the country you ſeem not yet to have forgotten, if we may judge from a ſimilarity of

language

language in ſeveral recent debates, in which ſome of you appeared to enjoy the anticipation of national defeat and diſaſter.

But the conduct of Oppoſition, in particular junctures, or their manner of reſiſting particular meaſures, we may be diſpoſed to forgive; we cannot ſo eaſily pardon that more ſyſtematic and determined contradiction, which ſome of you have ventured againſt the great and leading principles of the Conſtitution. Syſtematic I ſhould not call it, as far as that word implies conſiſtency of principle; you have ſhifted to oppoſite points, but ſtill in contradiction to the ſenſe of the nation. Equally unpopular in aſſertion of the overſtrained rights of monarchy, and in defence of the claims of a wild democracy, you offended alike the unbending ſpirit of freedom, and the generous attachment of loyalty.

We give you credit for the boldneſs of theſe declarations, which aſſail what we had been accuſtomed to regard as ſacred and eſtabliſhed principles. But their boldneſs has not the merit of originality; you borrowed them from the publications of an author, who, by accommodating his firſt work to the prejudices of his readers, acquired a reputation in one hemiſphere, which he was deſirous of extending to the other;

whoſe genius is equally ſuited to " buſy rebellion," whether it is to be excited by real oppreſſion, or rouſed by imaginary grievances. His celebrity, though faction has induſtriouſly ſwelled it much beyond its merit, is not altogether unfounded. Clear in his conceptions, and ſhrewd in his remarks, he delivers them with a confidence that is apt to impoſe on men who have thought but little of the ſubjects which he treats. He poſſeſſes that vulgar eloquence which a vigorous mind, untutored by claſſical education, and unreſtrained by delicacy or taſte, has an advantage in exhibiting; and he derives credit from the very want of qualities, which finer minds are at pains to cultivate. As in converſation that perſon will often be witty who never ſcruples being rude, ſo the writer will often appear nervous who is not afraid of being unjuſt or indecent. I have neither time nor inclination to defend the Britiſh Conſtitution (if it needed ſuch defence) againſt his miſrepreſentations in fact, or his ſophiſms in argument; but one ſimple and obvious conſideration muſt ſtrike the plaineſt and moſt unlettered reader. When he talks to us of the " *rights of men*," he forgets or wilfully conceals that we have already attained, that we have long poſſeſſed the " *rights of citizens*." Would he perſuade us to relinquiſh

relinquiſh all the advantages we derive from the culture and civilization of centuries, to return to the original unmodelled ſtate, the woods and wilds which our anceſtors inhabited? I fear we cannot get back the ſimplicity of thoſe ancient times along with their rudeneſs, their virtues along with their freedom; at leaſt it is not from ſome of the advocates of the "*rights* "*of men*" that we ſhall expect to be taught them.

It requires neither the genius of the philoſopher, nor the ſubtlety of the metaphyſician, to feel the advantages which our preſent Conſtitution affords. The manufacturer, the artizan, and the huſbandman, who enjoy the reward of their labours in the eaſe and ſecurity of a mild and wholeſome Government, will they thank the men who, in the pride of pampered luxury, in the wanton ſpeculations of idleneſs, or ſtill more blameably, from the ſelfiſh motives of avarice or ambition, would drag them from their family-comforts, and plunge them in all the miſeries of civil anarchy and diſcord? For Mr *Paine*, indeed, they can ſuggeſt an apology; he is an alien to Britain, and may ſpeculate without much remorſe on changes that might wreck her Conſtitution; but your conduct has not the ſame excuſe. Had he poſſeſſed a milder ſpirit,

benevolence might have withheld him; but duty ſhould reſtrain you. The ſacrifice of your country's peace would in him be only murder; in you it were parricide. Mr *Paine* may look on England as a foreign clime on which he is alighted, like the demon of our great epic poet, to carry back to his native land the triumph of ſucceſsful miſchief. *Milton*'s Satan, indeed, when he looked on that peaceful and happy world, into which his machinations were to introduce diſcord and ruin, dropped—— "Tears ſuch as Angels ſhed." But *Milton* made the arch-fiend a hero, wicked, but ſtill great, with valour in his revenge, and feeling in his reſentment—his little followers, the creeping buſy imps of cabal and faction, ſuited not the dignity of the *Epopeia;* the poet left them to the laſh of ſatire or the ridicule of comedy.

Of ridicule, as a teſt of truth, I do not approve ſo much as ſome writers have done. I have too great reſpect for ſome of you to join in indulging it at your expence; and I am more willing to admire than to criticiſe that exuberance of fancy and feeling which gives its ſoul to eloquence, and to language a ſort of inſpiration. But it has been a misfortune peculiarly to be regretted in your conduct, by the

abuſe

abuſe of eſtimable qualities, to bring into diſrepute the terms by which thoſe qualities are diſtinguiſhed. Your profeſſions have almoſt made patriotiſm a jeſt, and your connections have thrown a ridicule on friendſhip.

In this addreſs, and in theſe animadverſions, I am obliged to uſe a ſort of general language; though I am very ready to allow, that, in the aggregate body ſtiled *Oppoſition*, there are many characters to which my cenſures do not apply, I know there is a league of party which muſt not be diſſolved by ſlight differences in opinion or in intereſt. But there are compliances to which party cannot bend an honeſt mind, to which a prudent one ſhould be cautious of ſubmitting. One illuſtrious perſon who has been ſometimes ranked among your number, is too generous in his nature, and too warm in his attachment, always to perceive the ground on which he may be led by the raſhneſs, if not the deſign of his friends and companions; but methinks, it can hardly eſcape him, how much the new political doctrines which ſome of them are ſaid to favour and to circulate, trench on the promiſe and expectancy of his future ſituation. It is the privilege of a Britiſh prince to look on the Conſtitution as his birthright, as well as the birthright of the people. They have a com-

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mon intereſt, and muſt feel a common pride, in defending it. It can only be that ſecurity which the preſumed inſignificance of the attack may create in the one, or which an unſuſpicious magnanimity may produce in the other, that can repreſs the reſentment which both are entitled to feel againſt its enemies.

BRUTUS.

MAY 18. 1791.

LETTER XI.

To the OPPOSITION.

WHEN I laſt addreſſed you, I treated you with that reſpect to which the talents of moſt, and the characters of ſome of you, were entitled. I conſidered you as a public body of name and weight in the State, with eloquence to perſuade, or influence to lead a conſiderable number of your countrymen, who might think it, or call it virtue in a free government, to watch, to ſuſpect, and to blame the conduct of thoſe who are entruſted with its management.

For your hoſtility to Miniſters there was precedent as well as motive to excuſe what ſcrupulous men might call unfairneſs. Even in that hoſtility to your country, which ſome of you had lately indulged, there was a certain dignity of miſchief which might excite indignation, but could not provoke contempt. When we heard of your having an Ambaſſador at a foreign court, which, for ſome time paſt, had ſtood in determined oppoſition to

Great

Great Britain, there was a loftineſs as well as novelty in the idea that ſomewhat covered the atrocity of the meaſure. When your newſpapers oſtentatiouſly informed us, that the Sovereign of that country was to place the buſt of one of your number in her cabinet, we thought for a while of this diſtinction to his abilities as an orator, without conſidering its effects on his character as a patriot. We did not, indeed, compare him to *Demoſthenes;* but we could allow him a merit equal to ſome of the rivals of Demoſthenes, whom Philip of Macedon (as artful and ambitious as Catherine the II.) " delighted to honour." If he did not give us the idea of *Cicero*, he recalled to our mind ſome of the contemporary Romans, whoſe abilities their country admired and dreaded.

But in ſome recent occurrences we have ſeen you in a ſubordinate poſition equally unworthy of your talents, and derogatory of your dignity; diſſeminating the little falſehoods of newſpaper intelligence; traducing the characters of individuals; and wounding the feelings of their friends and relations, for the ſilly triumph of a day over the diſtreſſes of your country—the mere *Devils* of DEBRETT's Shop—You cannot (though the people may) miſtake the alluſion; for the preſs is an engine you have

have employed with ſome ſucceſs, and with unwearied aſſiduity.

What had Lord Cornwallis and General Abercromby done, that you ſhould ſo anxiouſly ſeek to degrade them, which certainly could not have the effect, which you might think it fair to attain by every ſort of means, of degrading adminiſtration?—We know the inverted ſyſtem of your favour to commanders; but the monſoons ſtopped the Generals in queſtion in the career of victory, and prevented them from having any freſh occaſion of diſobliging you. Lord Cornwallis, indeed, had the vice of intelligibility in his ſtile, and General Abercromby was accuſed by your accounts of ſuffering *with* his ſoldiers, both circumſtances that might offend ſome Generals of your party; while as a Governor, there are among your Indian friends, men who might have an equal title to complain of the antiquated ſtiffneſs of his Lordſhip's morality. But theſe were not offences ſufficient to require expiation by condemning the thouſands whom they commanded to miſery and famine, or leaving, with a pointed cruelty of invention, the ſick of the Bombay army to the mercy of their enemies. The diſtreſſing anxiety of the numbers in this country who are connected with the armies in

India,

India, gives an importance to these fables which otherwise they would not possess, and justifies my notice of the paltry machinations which gave them birth.

I am as much aware as I was in my former correspondence with you, that the more respectable part of your body will deny any participation of this mean and despicable mischief. But their countenance and support raise the insignificance, and prompt the exertions of the lower members of the party; and the unreserved satisfaction which some of your chiefs expressed in the defeats and disappointments of their country, is of the same family, though its port is nobler, with the creeping arts, the insidious falsehoods of the underlings who assist them.

BRUTUS.

DEC. 21. 1791.

LETTER XII.

To the Right Hon. C. J. F**.

SIR,

IN looking over the phalanx of Oppoſition, the public eye has been always pointed to you as its chief. Its friends exulted in your talents, and praiſed your virtues: your talents, even its enemies allowed; and if they doubted ſome of your imputed virtues in an abſolute moral view, yet, comparatively with their eſtimation of others, they were willing to admit them. They felt a conſolation in thinking, that if events ſhould ariſe by which that Party might be brought into power, the abilities and good qualities of Mr F** might, in conjunction with thoſe of ſome of his friends, whoſe characters they had been accuſtomed to reſpect, protect the country from the confident raſhneſs, the extravagant rapacity, or unprincipled ambition, by which they had reaſon to fear that others of his aſſociates might be prompted.

On ſome late occaſions, Sir, you have ſeemed determined to force them to change that opinion. It was impoſſible to reconcile to any friendſhip

friendſhip to your country, your ſupport of a recent meaſure, pregnant with every miſchief which political wiſdom could fear, or public virtue condemn. In the mover of that buſineſs, we might pardon to youthful preſumption, the malignity of a meaſure which he was too inconſiderate to ſee, or too inexperienced to underſtand. But you, Sir, are paſt that political heyday of the blood, which leads the raſh and the unwary to indulge a paſſion for change, and to overlook the dangers of blind uncertain innovation. Liberty is the natural miſtreſs of a young man, who is freſh from claſſical ſtudies, and has juſt beheld her in all the beauty of Greek and Roman eloquence. We are not much ſurpriſed, if a painted impoſtor, under her name, ſhould tempt him aſtray. But you, Sir, are more temperate in the choice of your connexions; you would look, one might imagine, to her intrinſic qualities, and not be dazzled by the tranſient complexion ſhe might wear, or the borrowed ornaments ſhe might aſſume.

In apologizing for the conduct of the younger members of this Aſſociation, we are obliged to ſtrain our good nature in aſcribing to them a want of foreſight which, even at their age, it is difficult to ſuppoſe, but which we cannot believe

believe poſſible at yours. A very moderate degree of foreſight was ſufficient to perceive, at this juncture, when anarchy and miſrule are "the very madneſs of the time," when certain moody ſpirits are known to be aſſiduouſly employed in decrying and endeavouring to ſubvert the Conſtitution, the danger of letting looſe mens minds and opinions on a ſubject that touches it ſo nearly. To do this required, one ſhould have thought, hands too deſperate to be found among perſons ſo circumſtanced as the leaders of this Aſſociation. There is, however, in the warmth and the vanity of their period of life, and of their rank in ſociety, a facility of being impoſed on, of which the artful and the profligate have never failed to take advantage. It is in this political club, as in the gaming ones of St James's Street; the cunning and the unprincipled, who run no riſk by the depth of the play, tell the young victims of their deſigns, that their ſkill is equal to that of the moſt knowing at the game, and inflame their ambition by the proſpect of ſtakes which, to them, it is in reality nothing to win, but which, it is undoubtedly ruin to loſe. You know the juſtneſs of this alluſion, Sir; but it is juſt only to a certain extent. At the gaming table a young man ventures for himſelf alone; this po-

litical hazard commits to the unequal chance which ſuch companions afford, the deareſt intereſts of the Commonweal. It ſets at ſtake all thoſe public bleſſings, all that national proſperity which, amidſt the misfortunes of ſurrounding countries, Britain has been fortunate enough to attain, and which it were one of thoſe acts of political ſuicide to which charitable men give the name of inſanity, wilfully to throw away.

There is often, unfortunately, a ſhew of manlineſs in actions, which, in truth, are only raſh or wicked. Manlineſs was a quality which your public appearances, whatever might be thought of their diſcretion, were generally allowed to poſſeſs. In the preſent inſtance, however, you did not quite come up to your characteriſtic firmneſs. You refuſed your name, and but half lent your opinion to this aſſociation. Thoſe who look to Mr F** for political direction, may eaſily determine on the merits of a meaſure which *he* wanted courage to adopt, and talents to defend. You wiſhed only to " call the attention of the people to ſuch objects;" this is a language not difficult to be underſtood. What is this but to open a mine of miſchief in which the enemies to all order and good government may dig at pleaſure;

where ignorance may confound, and temerity miſlead; and, worſe than ignorance or temerity, where every one will have an advantage exactly in an oppoſite proportion to what the wiſe and the good would wiſh, in proportion to the deſperation of his circumſtances and his abandonment of principle?

The general maxims on civil liberty and religious toleration, which you have of late been fond of delivering in Parliament, are but a ſort of commonplace, to which only talents like your's could give intereſt or novelty. Very inferior talents might ſuffice to diſcover the difference between the effective wiſdom of a ſtateſman, and the viſionary ſpeculations of a theoriſt; that neceſſity, or an experience next to neceſſity, is the only ſafe teacher of practical truths in particular governments; and that to adapt new expedients to infinitely complicated ſituations, is an experiment of ſuch hazard as actual and ſtrong inconvenience alone can juſtify.—But I aſk you pardon.—I am ſpeaking the ſentiments of one who wiſhes to preſerve the peace, the ſecurity, and the happineſs of a State; in a miſapprehenſion of your motives, I may perhaps do injuſtice to your diſcernment.

Were I partizan of the Miniſter, I ſhould be

apt to remark it as a compliment to his adminiſtration, that his adverſaries aſſail him through the Conſtitution, and complain not of *his* defects, but of *its* imperfections. But the preſent ſubject is of too much importance to be attached to the private intereſts of any individual, be his merits or his eſtimation what they may. The queſtion is not, who ſhall guide the ſtate-veſſel,—but if ſhe ſhall be wantonly expoſed to tempeſts and to ſhipwreck? I believe you too proud as well as too honeſt eaſily to bear the thoughts of that imputation which many will on this occaſion bring againſt you, of watching the ſtorm for the plunder of the wreck; that, tired of unſucceſsful oppoſition, and ſeeing no proſpect of change in the repoſe of theſe proſperous times, you are content to riſk the internal peace of the kingdom, if amidſt the war of faction you may attain that power which the peace of the kingdom is likely to deny you.

I am willing, however, to truſt with thoſe who have a proper reſpect for our national character, and contraſt it with that foreign levity which one day ſwells into a madman's valour, and the next day ſinks into the deſpondency of a coward, which one day melts in the ſentiment of a Romance, and the next day burſts into the fury of a Savage; I am willing

ling to truſt with ſuch men, that the good ſenſe of a very great majority of the people will ſave us from any of thoſe calamities which the unthinking might cauſe, or the profligate enjoy. But we muſt remember the injury intended us, though its accompliſhment may be prevented. Nor will our gratitude want objects any more than our reſentment. Beſides thoſe whoſe eloquence was exerted in the cauſe of their country, there are others, with whom it has been your boaſt to act, to whom we are indebted for a ſtrenuous reſiſtance to this meaſure, though their party connections might, in lighter or leſs worthy minds, have pleaded for its ſupport. We are glad of another opportunity of beſtowing our applauſe on the virtue of the Duke of ********* and Lord **********. In your better moments you muſt feel it as we do; we hope, not leſs for the ſake of your fame than of our intereſt, that you will follow as well as feel it.

BRUTUS.

May 21. 1792.

LETTER XIII.

To the Right Hon. LORD T******.

IN eſtimating the value of high rank or ſtation, men have always taken as much into account the indulgence of their pride as the gratification of their intereſt. Dignity, real or aſſumed, has been often preferred to enjoyment, and what we were obliged to appear, or wiſhed to be thought, been more conſidered than what we really felt or what we really were.

In ſome caſes this is a ſelf-denial; and as every Self-denial is a Virtue, it obtains the praiſe or approbation of the world. He who covers the ſocial complacency of his temper with the robes of his official dignity, has the merit of conſtraining his mind from its favourite bias, and of ſacrificing his eaſe to his duty.

But there are men ſo formed as to be very unſuſceptible of the ſympathies of ſociety, as to feel little pleaſure from the eaſe or happineſs, as to feel no pain from the uneaſineſs or diſtreſs of thoſe around them. To ſuch men the dignity

nity of office is but the indulgence of a naturally overbearing diſpoſition, and to ſupport the wholeſome rigour of place and truſt, is in them only to maintain a natural and inſtinctive inflexibility.

Even in ſuch men, however, this diſpoſition may have the effect, though not the merit, of Virtue. In particular departments, and under the guidance of a vigorous underſtanding, this unfeeling ſturdineſs of temper may be uſeful to reſtrain abuſe, or to correct irregularity. Like thoſe mounds which we oppoſe to the overflowing of rivers, or the encroachment of tides; the materials are rugged and diſagreeable; but we pardon the harſhneſs of their appearance on account of the advantage and ſecurity we derive from them.

If I had formerly ventured to apply ſuch obſervations as the foregoing to your Lordſhip, the public might perhaps have accuſed me of injuſtice. The public had ſeen and felt the uſefulneſs of your political firmneſs, and were diſpoſed to give it their praiſe unabated by the reflection that it was rather a conſtitutional quality than a virtue. One of its firſt remarkable exertions happened on an occaſion when obſtinacy had an alliance with feeling, and intereſted the people accordingly; when you ſtood

linked with other friends of your Sovereign and of the country, and guarded both, with ſteady and immoveable reſolution, in the midſt of an awful and unforeſeen calamity.

That merit, my Lord, ſhaded many of the failings which we could not but perceive in your character, and we were unwilling to detract from the ſuppoſed value of your unaccommodating firmneſs, inconvenient as it frequently was to your country. We were unwilling to call your objections to particular meaſures *humour*, though we might regret the time or the occaſion when they were ſtated; though we thought they might have been of more advantage to the community, had they come rather in the ſhape of ſuggeſtion than of cenſure, had you been ſometimes as candid to propoſe, as you were ſevere to condemn. Your abilities might have better entitled you to our gratitude and our praiſe, had they been employed rather to prompt and encourage uſeful meaſures, than to criticiſe or reprehend imperfect ones; yet we were diſpoſed to allow them more than the proportionate merit which even in that province they might claim. If we could not praiſe you as the ancients did thoſe benevolent deities who beſtowed bleſſings on mankind, we could at leaſt allow you an altar like the *Atrox Dis*,

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whoſe terrors chaſtened preſumption, and impreſſed a ſalutary caution on proſperity.

But there are limits, my Lord, beyond which the indulgence even of reſpectable eccentricity cannot be ſubmitted to, beyond which it is not the privilege even of talents and qualities ſuch as your Lordſhip's to paſs. Even if a licence beyond the former practice or decorum of the cabinet had been continued in your favour, you ſhould have tempered its ſallies with a decency of expreſſion, with a moderation of language, leſs unbecoming to you, and leſs offenſive to others. The unity of his Majeſty's Councils you had for ſome time impeached beyond perhaps what prudence in your fellow-counſellors, certainly beyond what a ſenſe of propriety in you, ſhould have admitted; but when you puſhed this to a length ſo outrageous as in ſome of your later appearances, you ſtruck at the root of that public opinion and confidence, without which no Miniſter of Great Britain can be permanently uſeful to his country. You might think this courage, my Lord, but thoſe who looked on it attentively, could not agree with you; it had none of the boldneſs of manly determined hoſtility, but merely the fitful ſpirit of a womaniſh ſpleen.—You might think it diſintereſted, but the public were of a different

ent opinion; they ſaw you profit by a ſituation to which your mind was averſe; joined in official advantages, without any alliance of principle or opinion, with your colleagues. Cynic manners are only admired when leagued with cynic auſterity and ſelf-denial; the replies of *Diogenes* to *Alexander*, which were heroiſm from his tub, would have been impertinence from the ſilken couches of Babylon or Perſepolis.

If you were reprehenſible in the general public oppoſition to meaſures which you muſt have officially been held to aſſent to in another place, you were no leſs unfortunate in the inſtances in which you choſe to ſhow this oppoſition. The meaſure of a check on the future accumulation of the public debt, was one of thoſe acts of preventive wiſdom which the nation muſt feel as the beſt ſecurity for her public credit, as the beſt pledge for her future proſperity. You oppoſed it as an unwarrantable reſtriction on ſucceeding Adminiſtrations, though your legal knowledge muſt have immediately informed you, that the ſame objection might be made to every act of the Legiſlature eſtabliſhing any permanent regulation; and you abuſed, in unqualified terms, the inſolence of dictating to poſterity, though no man is ſo apt

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as your Lordſhip to quote the *dicta* of our anceſtors to bind down modern reaſon or modern humanity. In your oppoſition to the *Libel* Bill, you were more conſiſtent with this ruling principle of your opinions; yet the people could not conceal their diſſatisfaction at finding this moderate ſacrifice of legal ſtrictneſs (even granting, of which I believe the reverſe to be true, that ſtrict legal analogy was favourable to your argument,) to what they conceived to be their right, oppoſed by your Lordſhip ſingly of all the ſervants of the Crown. In other inſtances you liſted popular prejudices on the ſide of your animoſity againſt the Miniſter, and did not diſdain to uſe thoſe vulgar weapons when you thought they might be employed to his diſadvantage.

But it was not only in the expreſſion of diſcontent that you gave way to the ſpleen of the moment; your ſilence, my Lord, appeared to us equally undignified and inconſiſtent. On a late trying occaſion, when the friends of good order and government were gathered as it were round the throne, to guard the Conſtitution againſt the wickedneſs of deſigning, and the raſhneſs of unthinking men, we looked for that *Telamonian* ſhield which uſed to be ſpread in its defence, and expected your powerful voice in

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aid of a meaſure calculated for the ſecurity and peace of the country. On that occaſion you ſaw the diſtinctions of party forgotten, and the public virtue of the moſt reſpectable characters in Oppoſition overbear their private reſentments on the one hand, and their private connections on the other. It was the very moment for your ſtepping forth to join them; feeling the ſtrong call which your peculiar ſituation then made upon you, you cannot wonder if we felt a proportional diſappointment; if we thought leſs favourably of the man who could ſmother his natural propenſity at the inſtant when it became a Virtue, to indulge in the little gratification of perſonal diſguſt and animoſity.

That party, my Lord, whoſe intereſt it formerly was to decry your principles, were in uſe to hold them out as of an arbitrary or high prerogative kind, unfavourable to freedom and the rights of the people. The change in your ſituation will probably induce a change in their language, and they will court an alliance with one of your Lordſhip's eminent abilities, however adverſe it may ſeem to the tenor of your political opinions. But we have too high an opinion of your ſenſe and diſcernment, to believe that you will ſuffer yourſelf to be drawn

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into a junction which would contradict every principle on which your public conduct has been formed, from which the weight of your public arguments has been drawn. In ſome of that party, we have been accuſtomed to alliances of this ſort; but let us not be mortified with ſuch a dereliction of principle in your Lordſhip. Let us not have to regret the weakneſs of a mind, to whoſe wiſdom the country may ſtill look for direction, on whoſe ſtrength it may ſtill lean for ſupport.

BRUTUS.

July 4. 1792.

LETTER XIV.

To the Right Hon. C. J. F**.

SIR,

IT is ſo long ſince I had occaſion to addreſs you, that you may perhaps have forgotten me as a correſpondent. My time of life, to which little employments give much occupation, and that indolence to which it conſiders itſelf intitled, diſpoſe me but little for writing —But now!—at this time, which in your firſt ſpeech of the preſent ſeſſion you deſcribed as ſo momentous;—had I never written at all, nor thought of venturing to write on public concerns, I ſhould have burſt, like *Cræſus'* ſon, the fetters of dumbneſs, and called to you, Sir, with the ſame mingled exclamation of fear, of pity, and of indignation, in which he addreſſed the aſſaſſin of his father—Hold! it is my country!

It is not now, Sir, as often on other occaſions, that we feel, merely as ſpectators, the exhibition of your talents; the field on which they are diſplayed is our deareſt inheritance.

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The queſtions of the preſent time do not, like ſome former ones in which you were engaged, involve only the concerns of a party, or the ſituation of individuals. It is not on the petty conteſts of placemen, the little embarraſſments of a Miniſter, or the little exultations of Oppoſition, that Parliament and the people are now to decide;—it is on our exiſtence as the proſperous and envied nation we are; on the maintenance of that Conſtitution from which all that proſperity is derived, by which alone it is ſupported.

But my anxiety had magnified the danger, as you had over-rated the power of your exertions. There is a point beyond which even the talents of Mr F** cannot perſuade the ignorant or overcome the weak; and it is fortunate for mankind, that when the greateſt talents are exerted in a bad cauſe, they not only fail in proportion to its weakneſs, but in the conſciouſneſs of the hollow ground on which they tread, they loſe that force which otherwiſe they would intrinſically poſſeſs. It was this which palſied your eloquence in ſome of your ſubſequent appearances in the Houſe of Commons; you looked round and ſaw the friends who had left you; you ſaw the men who had *not* left you; the leſſon was equal from both. You faulter'd

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out ſomething like a confeſſion of your miſtake; the country called it deſpair, I hoped it was virtue.

You have, ſince that time, been at ſome pains to undeceive me, otherwiſe I ſhould not have diſturbed your buſineſs, or my own leiſure, with this addreſs. That rapidity, I may call it raſhneſs of political declaration, which your friends have ſometimes excuſed as conſtitutional, or praiſed as artleſs and ſincere; that unweighed exertion of eloquence with which, if you have ſeldom adorned the triumph, you have often decorated the fall of the great public meaſures of Oppoſition, might have been pardoned as congenial to the warmth of your nature, to the general indiſcretion of your parliamentary conduct. But you have, after taking time to weigh the conſequences both to yourſelf and to your country, deliberately maintained the poſt of ſingularity, which, in oppoſition to all your former connexions, as well as principles, you had choſen to occupy. You have ſummoned your little phalanx around you, have encouraged them by harangues and eulogiums, and received the tribute of theirs. You have imped out the ſillineſs of a T*****, have ſwelled the pride of G***, have plumed the vanity of E******. You have wiſhed, in

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ſhort, at whatever expence of reſpectability or character, to be the chief of a party, ſeparate as much from the ſenſe as from the intereſt of the country, and fortunately ſeparate alſo from that with which private friendſhip had formerly linked you, whoſe virtues and talents might have drawn a good man to follow them, even though a little out of the line of political wiſdom or public ſafety.

You have been equally unfortunate in the aſſociates whom you have acquired, as in thoſe you have loſt: amidſt all my reſentment at your conduct, I muſt compaſſionate your ſituation, when I ſee you colleagued in this buſineſs with the Marquis of L********. The Marquis is a friend to *peace*, though one which he made for this country coſt him his office. That peace, however neceſſary to us, or hurtful to him, it was your lot to condemn in terms the moſt unreſerved and vehement; and in general, indeed, to oppoſe him with a perſonal violence, which nothing but a ſympathetic agreement on great public meaſures like the preſent could poſſibly overcome. Now, however, you adopt the ſame conduct, you lay down the ſame principles, you uſe almoſt *verbatim* the ſame language with his Lordſhip. There was only a trifling diſſimilarity at the cloſe of the debate.

His Lordſhip, always leſs bold and more polite than you, declined a diviſion of the Houſe, or to allow his name to bluſh in almoſt ſolitary ſhyneſs at the bottom of a proteſt. As unfortunate in this coalition of opinion, as you formerly were in a coalition of party, the people look on both alike.

Lord L******** has motives for differing from the people which do not apply to you. He is not formed for being popular, and muſt remain ſatisfied with the applauſe of the learned, and the wiſe of his own and of other countries, of that ſmall academic ſociety which he contrives to aſſemble in *Berkley Square*. He has always indulged in that appearance of ſecret intelligence of deep deſign; in that air of myſtery and concealment, which ignorant plain men take for miſchief, which of all habits of life is the moſt unfavourable to popular eſteem in this country. Plots and ſeditions his Lordſhip conſiders as he does other arts and ſciences, in which he is an *amateur* merely, never performs himſelf, but likes to have performers of eminence about him. They have acceſs to his library, and the entrée to his table; and he, in return, feaſts on all that refuſe of ſtate ſcience, which a wiſe man would deſpiſe, and a good man would reject. From ſuch a bent of mind,

mind, and ſuch a direction of ſtudy, his preſent appearance may eaſily be accounted for. Amidſt all that maze of diplomatic knowledge which runs through the windings of his head, and often waters the flowers of his eloquence, he could not forget the treaty for the ſecurity of Holland, to which Britain was a party, and France a guarantee; but his ſyſtem of public morality holds nothing to be binding on nations that is not conducive to their advantage. This is an imitation of France, which has indeed a double authority to ſupport it; it was one of the vices of her monarchy, it is one of the virtues of her Republic.

But you, Sir, are as rich in knowledge, though not in books, as the Marquis; and you do not, as he has been ſometimes ſuppoſed to do, keep books without reading, and read books without underſtanding them. You will eaſily ſee, in the hiſtory of nations, that every thing which is not a Monarchy, is not therefore a Republic. In thoſe Republics from which, in claſſical fondneſs, we are apt to take our ideas of their nature, we find indeed much inconvenience, much corruption; a diſpoſition to conſtant internal commotion, to perpetual foreign war. But there was ſomething of energy, though often interrupted, in the government

of the rulers; of a ſenſe of juſtice, though often miſled, in the people. In France we look in vain for either; the government is as weak as the people are wicked. There is indeed a force in her arms, which, as military glory always does, has dazzled the world; but it is like the unnatural ſtrength of a lunatic; a frantic valour, which leads only to deſtruction, and cannot ſupport or eſtabliſh any ſober or rational purpoſe; which accidental advantages have ſwelled into inſolence, and an accidental check will ſink into deſpondency.

The virtue of Republicaniſm is loſt, but its weakneſs and its paſſions remain. Modern Republicans generally think leſs of liberty to the people, than of power to themſelves; and whether by a Dictator to rule, or a Tribune to guide, the folly or madneſs of the multitude is always made ſubſervient to the intereſts of a Demagogue. You have not been inſenſible to the vanity, though averſe to the appearance of ſovereignty and rule. You have had your Senate as ſubmiſſive and as flattering as any of the Emperors; you have had your panegyric, though ſomewhat different from *Trajan*, as your panegyriſt was not altogether like *Pliny*; you have had your birth-day Odes, and Captain *Morris* is almoſt as good a poet as *Colley Cibber*.

Cibber. All this, indeed, you have told us, is derived from ourſelves; and your laſt bumper at the laſt meeting at the *Crown and Anchor* was filled " to the Majeſty of the People." If by this was meant the majeſty of the ſmall body of the people then aſſembled to hear your eloquence, and to diſplay their own, we will allow the ſincerity of the toaſt; but if it means the majeſty of the nation, we muſt examine the conduct, rather than the words, of the man who expreſſed it.

For that purpoſe, Sir, we muſt look back to your ſpeeches, during this ſeſſion, on the Addreſs to the King, and in ſupport of your motion for opening a negociation with France. We muſt find the Majeſty of the People in propoſals for the greateſt degradation; we muſt forget every ſentiment of morality, all the pride of virtue with which the people of this country have ſometimes been flattered by their hiſtorians. We muſt think it dignity to ſolicit the friendſhip and to deprecate the hoſtility of that horde of banditti, who for the moment have got poſſeſſion of the Government of France. We muſt call it virtue to court an alliance (at the expence of diſſolving or looſening our connection with our ancient and natural allies), with men who have ſet aſide all mo-

ral obligation, who have renounced juſtice, who have proſcribed humanity. We muſt have found political wiſdom and pride (for in a certain degree of political pride there is always political wiſdom), in confirming the ſlander which ſome of the moſt deſpicable and abandoned men of this country had delivered to the moſt deſpicable and abandoned men of that. We muſt, for the firſt time, have ſued to be the friends of France, at that moment when France had declared its enmity to every thing that is amiable in ſociety, or venerable in man. We muſt have abandoned our King and abjured our God!—And this, Sir, is what you would recommend, whoſe favourite ſentiment is "the Majeſty of the People."

I am proud, Sir, to trace, though not with your pencil, the real Majeſty of the People of Great Britain. It was ſhewn in the indignation with which they received your propoſition for a junction with the follies and the crimes of France. It has been ſhewn in that exuberant loyalty and attachment to the virtues of their Monarch, which it is only in the power of a free people to beſtow; Loyalty in its moſt liberal ſenſe; Loyalty to the Laws, as well as to the Sovereign who guards them. It is ſhewn at the inſtant I write, in their pity for the fate

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of another Monarch, as blameleſs, at leaſt as benevolent as their own;—whoſe laſt days adverſity, while it chaſtened, has ſeemed to inſpire, and drawn for his accumulated afflictions, not only the regrets of the worthy, but the reſpect of the wiſe. That country, in which theſe afflictions were derided, inſulted, and enjoyed; in which not only is juſtice diſowned, but the decency of her forms is diſregarded; not only is humanity extinguiſhed, but the curteſy that mimics it is forgotten; in which all the natural ferocity of ſavage, is mingled with all the artificial cruelty of cultivated life.—That country, Sir, which, with all thoſe qualities, you would recommend to our alliance, occupies, alas! ſo large a ſpace of the habitable world, that when a good man thinks of it, as at preſent, almoſt blotted from the maſs of humanity, the reſentments of his nature ſink into humiliation, and he almoſt forgets his abhorrence at France in his ſympathy for mankind!—You muſt feel this, Sir, as we do, elſe your nature is changed in the peeviſhneſs of diſappointed ambition.—Your enemies will bid you ſhelter under the virtue of your country—I would be your friend if you will allow me—I will exhort you to ſhare it.

BRUTUS.

LETTER XV.

To the M****** *of* L********.

"THE Lion," ſays the Tragedian, "preys not upon carcaſes."—There is a certain degree of reſpect or abilities, of natural pre-eminence or acquired reputation, which a generous adverſary wiſhes in his opponent, without which the conteſt can neither animate the vigour of his attack, nor ſwell the pride of his victory. Poſſeſſed of ſome ſuch feeling as this, My Lord, I have hitherto abſtained from correſponding with you. But you have at laſt made yourſelf worthy of my correſpondence; there is a ſort of ſublimity in contempt of character, as there is ſomething like genius in an exceſs of ſtupidity; from an odd ſuperſtition in the latter caſe, ideots were, of old, ſuppoſed to draw an inſpiration from Heaven; whence your Lordſhip is inſpired it is needleſs to inquire.

There may beſides be ſome uſe, though there is no pleaſure, in tracing certain characters; the

the Student of Morality may profit, as the Linguiſt profits by exerciſes of bad language. Alas! I am afraid that in theſe times (ſuch is the envy and malice of this race of little men,) this ſort of leſſon will be the moſt popular of the two; and that an audience will be more intereſted to hear what Lord L******** is, than what Epaminondas or Ariſtides was.

I need not, however, take up time by any unneceſſary detail. The people have long ago ſumm'd up your character, and ſaved me the invidious taſk of going over the items. They have ſettled it in their opinion, have fixed it in proverbs, have conſolidated it into nick-names. It is but a few paſſing ſentences I mean to indulge in, to mark your appearances now, at a time unhappily ſo momentous, that the opinion of every public man, even with fewer opportunities, and meaner talents than your Lordſhip's, is of importance. Your conduct now, My Lord, will not hurt the unity of your character. We can trace in it that ſame amiable conſiſtency, which the ravings of one of your few aſſociates in the Upper Houſe have held up to our admiration, in that excellent Philoſopher, Journaliſt, and Citizen, M. *Briſſot*. This is a quality which the Noble Earl might have found without travelling to France for an example.

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The annals of the *Old Bailey* can furniſh ſome inſtances of perſons, the even tenor of whoſe lives has never been interrupted by any deviation from that ſtyle in which they began. The ſentence ſwelled to its cloſe, without one pauſe from reflection, one point of interrogation from conſcience, or of admiration from remorſe—till it found its period in the gibbet or Botany-bay. I know your Lordſhip to be as fond of *philology* as of *morals*, and therefore may be allowed this chace of the metaphor.

In morals, My Lord, you had, indeed, a maſter of the very firſt ability—a man whoſe heart was as much inſpired by goodneſs as his mind was illuminated by knowledge.—You have repaid him for his inſtruction, by tracing the modern French morality from his ſchool! Could he, the great aim of whoſe writings was to make virtue amiable, and religion reſpected—whoſe manners were not more friendly to human kind than his maxims, and whoſe life was an exerciſe of that ſocial ſympathy which his wiſdom developed, and his eloquence adorned—Could he, who ſmiled at the golden viſions of the benevolent *Turgot*, and foretold the conſequence of the well-meaning weakneſs of *Neckar*—Could he have foreſeen that you would have cited his works as the text for the principles of

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that banditti who have ſucceeded thoſe Miniſters?—Gentle as he was from nature, and tender to you from early acquaintance, he would have diſclaimed the imputation with indignant anger, and pointed out the ſoil from which this noxious opinion had ſprung, which his tuition could neither fertilize into genius, nor warm into virtue.

In the preſent period, when the deareſt intereſts of Great Britain are at ſtake, you have joined with men with whom ſuch junction was not natural, either from the bent of your diſpoſition, the habits of your life, or the former ſtate of parties, in oppoſition to meaſures which the unanimous voice of the country had pointed out as neceſſary to her ſafety, and indeed to her exiſtence. In this ſingularity, however, you made fewer ſacrifices than your ally in the other Houſe.—You had no "Troops of friends" of whom you might regret the loſs; none of that popular favour, which it is, perhaps, a weakneſs, but one of the beſt of our weakneſſes, to value. On the contrary, the familiars of your Houſe, and the applauders of your abilities, were likely to be drawn more cloſely to your ſide, by your oppoſition or recommendation of the meaſures you oppoſed or recommended. You wiſhed us to ſleep in ſecurity,

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without Parliaments being called to deliberate on our ſituation, and inveighed againſt Miniſters for holding out imaginary dangers, and groundleſs alarms. Danger and alarm, My Lord, are terms relative to our ſentiments as well as our ſituations; and there are, among your Lordſhip's acquaintance, to whom the circumſtances, we feared, might not have ſeemed deſerving of thoſe appellations. One perſon, who is particularly indebted to your Lordſhip's protection and friendſhip, has not ſcrupled to avow, that he was laying, grain by grain, a maſs of gun-powder under a very material part of the Britiſh Conſtitution: he would not have called it danger when this mine was laid, nor would have thought it an alarm when it was ſprung.

That man, however, is rather too warm for a conſpirator. There is an Engliſh bluntneſs and boldneſs in his character, which makes him leſs dangerous than an enemy leſs determined might prove. He gives warning, like the rattleſnake, of the approaching miſchief; and does not glide, like ſome meaner reptiles, from ſecret lurking places in our own country, to ſpread his poiſon over an unſuſpecting land. The *Aliens Bill*, which your Lordſhip oppoſed with ſo much feeling, was intended to protect us from

from this danger. But again, it was a danger which your Lordſhip had learned not to fear; it was familiar to your thoughts, and, like other dangers, had loſt its terrors by its familiarity.

In weighing the intereſts of nations, political men are ſuppoſed to blunt their feelings for private calamity. Your Lordſhip had the merit of preſerving yours; and it was the chief recommendation of your motion of the 21ſt of December, that it was meant to interpoſe the influence of Great Britain between a late unfortunate Monarch and his unmerited fate. The effect of ſuch interpoſition, however, if we may judge from the example of another country, your Lordſhip's general good intelligence had not enabled you to foreſee. Humility may ſometimes be uſeful, though it is degrading; but in this inſtance, it would have lowered our dignity, without ſerving the cauſe of our compaſſion; it would have but added to the inſolence of the bold, and given encouragement to the timid. The triumph of the one, and the malice of the other, are now conſummated; their ill-fated Monarch has eſcaped from both. Amidſt the ſacrifice of his life, they have embalmed his memory. His little errors and weakneſſes, the grave has covered; but it has left

left his ſufferings and his virtues to the eſteem, the pity, and the indignation of mankind.

In your laſt appearance, My Lord, you ſeem to have forgotten this caſual emotion of generoſity. You adviſed the Houſe to leave our allies the Dutch to their fate, becauſe they were too feeble, of themſelves, to make any effectual reſiſtance. It is only by entreaty and negociation that you would ſtep between France and the victims of her cruelty or ambition. You are too much of a politician to think of glory—too much of a philoſopher to build on reputation; but to talk in a language your Lordſhip underſtands, would there not, in ſuch a conduct, be as little ſafety as there is dignity—as little policy as honour? We ſhould allow ourſelves to fall in the laſt corner of the laſt redoubt againſt French encroachments, unleſs we could ſave ourſelves by your favourite means of abject ſubmiſſion and ſolicitation.

But you are fertile in reſources, My Lord, and have found out for us means more powerful than either the conciliation of diplomatic, or the impreſſion of military exertions. A majority, you ſay, might have been procured in the National Convention, at leſs *expence* than one day's war will coſt us. From what pure repoſitory of ways and means did your Lordſhip

ſhip draw this idea for its ſerious propoſal to a Britiſh Houſe of Parliament? My Lord, we know ſomething of your principles, and have heard ſomething of your life; we could make large allowances for what you might *do*; but we gave you credit for ſome reſerve in your declarations, and we did not know till now how much you could *ſay*.

We are obliged to you, however, for your frankneſs, and can fairly ſet you down as one whom the modern French principles will not ſo much convert as confirm. To you, My Lord, accuſtomed to the ſociety of men who had already advanced a great way towards the acknowledgment of thoſe doctrines, there will be rather an accommodation than an inconveniency in their general adoption. "I had thoughts (ſays the Bawd in the farce) of the Romiſh perſuaſion; 'tis ſo comfortable a religion for a ſinner to die in."

Seriouſly, My Lord, we feel leſs reſentment than ſatisfaction at the part you have taken in the preſent buſineſs. With the country ranged on one ſide of this queſtion, your Lordſhip and your few ill-ſorted aſſociates on the other—no good man can regret the conteſt, and there is ſcarce a man ſo timorous as to fear it.

FEB. 13. 1793. BRUTUS.

LETTER XVI.

To the Right Hon. C. J. F**.

SINCE I laſt addreſſed you, Sir, you have taken a ſtep which is rather unuſual with you. You have appealed to the people, through the channel of the preſs, and laid before them a detail and a juſtification of your late conduct in parliament. You muſt feel the ſtrong neceſſity of a defence, when you defend yourſelf in this manner. Your letter to the Electors of Weſtminſter has this moment reached me. I will lay aſide any reſentment which I had catched from the public ſentiment with regard to you, and make a few remarks on that letter, with the impartiality and the dullneſs of a mere commentator.

It will not be eaſy for your conſtituents to account for, or to approve your reprehenſion of the early aſſembling of the Parliament. The nation looked to the meeting of Parliament as the beſt meaſure for their ſafety. If there was a doubt of its being ſtrictly authoriſed by the ſtatute, it was a duty of that important kind,

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in which Miniſters were bound to ſtep from behind this legal ſhield, and to perform it at the riſk of their own perſonal ſafety. But what was the riſk, and " whom was it to offend?" —Mr F**, and his few remaining partizans, who wiſhed this guardian of the public ſafety to ſleep a little longer; while the ſeditious ſpirit it was to reſiſt ſhould grow to a ſtrength it would be difficult to overcome. That you, or any of thoſe partizans were to direct the ſtorm, I will not venture, ſince you proteſt againſt miſrepreſentation, to ſuppoſe; that you would have enjoyed it, I cannot help believing; and with my country I know that belief is univerſal.

You talk with feeling of the miſchiefs of that falſe alarm, which you ſay this aſſembling of the Parliament created: " it deſtroyed the peace, the harmony, the confidence of Britiſh Citizens; it inflamed political prejudices, and party violence." If ſuch, we are to ſuppoſe, the effects of general proviſions for the public ſecurity, what would have been the conſequence of the Parliamentary enquiry you ſuggeſt as the preferable mode of acting; of that inquiſitorial proceeding which muſt have pointed out particular objects of the fear and reſentment of the people? The wiſe, as well as the moderate, wiſhed for ſafety, not for vengeance; for ſe-

curity to the innocent, rather than puniſhment to the guilty.

But the danger which the meaſures of Parliament were to prevent, were only, you ſay, from theories and opinions, which, till they took the ſhape of overt acts, could not be reſiſted by any of the preparations of which you complain, as ſo alarming. What then is the uſe of that preventive wiſdom, which you have ſo often, on other occaſions, recommended to Miniſters? Alarm is wiſdom when it ſteps before real danger; it is cowardice when conceived too early; it is folly when conceived too late. The whole country had already felt the alarm of fear; they were relieved when they found it was adopted by Government as a precaution for ſafety. The good people of the houſe ſleep the ſounder when their window-ſhutters have bells, and their doors have chains; and they keep a watchful eye on thoſe ſuſpected ſervants who deny the noiſes that have been nightly heard, and wonder at the ſuppoſition of thieves.

Your firſt motion, you ſay, was to reſtore us to that internal quiet of which our fears only had robbed us; your ſecond, to inſure us that external peace which our raſhneſs was about to throw away. General declamation againſt

againſt war is one of the common-places, to which a commercial country like this, will always readily liſten, and which your friends and you have liberally employed. But the queſtion now is, not whether war be an evil, but whether, in competition with greater evils, it may not be wiſdom to ſubmit to it; whether war now, with probable advantages in the carrying it on, be not leſs an evil than war at a future period, without thoſe advantages. Whether we ſhall ſuffer the inordinate ambition of France to over-run Europe (as was well ſaid by Mr Wyndham) in detail, or endeavour to prevent that calamity, by joining thoſe powers who at preſent make head againſt her encroachments. At preſent, the combined intereſts of our allies, the ſpirit of our own country, every motive, whether of affection in the loyal, of public virtue in the patriotic, of reſentment in the warm, or of prudence in the cold, are on the ſide of Britain againſt the avowed hoſtility of France. Mr F**, and the ſmall phalanx around him, are, indeed, on the other ſide of this great queſtion; but like the hackneyed maxim of Logic and of Law, it is but an exception which confirms the general truth, a diſſent which marks the weight and force of the national unanimity.

In defence of your propoſal for a negociation with France, the leading argument is, that it is only from the power that has injured or inſulted her, that a nation can obtain redreſs, or receive acknowledgement; and that we muſt, at ſome time or other, treat with the ſame parties whom now a falſe nicety and punctilio prevent us from approaching. Waving the poſſible ſuppoſition that a form of Government, which has twice changed within two years, may have undergone another change before the period of negociation arrives, there is a change in the acts and declarations of the ſame collective body, which makes a material difference in the dignity, the propriety, or if theſe words ſeem fantaſtic to you, in the expediency of treating with it. The language of the preſent National Convention is repulſive of any negociation from Great Britain, under her preſent conſtitution. The Convention is, in principles and ſyſtem, the declared enemy of Kings, and from a Monarchical Government it may ſuffer, but cannot ſtipulate with an Ambaſſador. Of this country, in particular, it has pronounced its opinion, that the Government is a ſeparate party from the people. From the people, as in its folly it believed, or in its vanity pretended to call them, it has already received Ambaſ-

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ſadors and anſwered addreſſes. What miſſion could the King's Ambaſſador ſhew to entitle him to greater credence, or a more favourable reception? The Convention has formed a language for the people, and no Envoy, who held a different one, would be ſuppoſed to ſpeak from their authority. Even you, Sir, they would not truſt as the repreſentative of the people of Great Britain. They have declared by the mouth of one of their leading members, their opinion of Mr F**; that the motive of his public conduct is merely his own private advantage, that his patriotiſm is only diſappointed ambition, and a deſire of re-eſtabliſhing himſelf in office. There are a good many of your acquaintance in France, and they have, perhaps, drawn this portrait not altogether from fancy.

You wiſh to confound our fulfilment of exiſting treaties, our co-operation for the intereſt and ſafety of our allies, with the idea of our entering into the ſuppoſed confederacy for a counter-revolution in France. That every good man muſt join in wiſhing ſome change in a Government (if Government it can be called) which encourages or ſuffers ſuch monſtrous enormities as France has witneſſed, it is natural to ſuppoſe; but that Britain has leagued

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for a Counter-revolution in that country, the whole tenor of her conduct has belied. Her neutrality has been not only rigid, but generous. She took no advantage of the weakneſs or diſtraction in the Councils of her rival power; ſhe relieved the diſtreſſes which ſome of the partizans of the Revolution had felt in diſtant parts of the French Empire, from the diſaffection of the ancient authorities, and gave that aſſiſtance which good neighbourhood prompted to the wants and neceſſities of ſeveral functionaries of the new. For the victims of the injuſtice and cruelty of the Revolution, it was impoſſible not to feel compaſſion; but the national ſentiment did not influence the national conduct. It was not till ſelf-defence conſtrained her, that Britain became the enemy of France; and not till France had become the enemy of Mankind, had ſtruck at the baſis of all ſocial and all political ſecurity.

You are fond of alluding to the Ruſſian armament, as an inſtance of a minority ſaving the country from the imprudence of Adminiſtration; yet, but a few pages before, you complain of the want of attention in Miniſters to preſerve the balance of power in Europe. You know, Sir, if you will ſpeak ſincerely, how much, but for your counter-exertions, it was then

then in the power of Britain to preſerve that balance, how much it was loſt by the check which you contrived to give to her interpoſition. Why force on the recollection of the country a report, which, like ſome other impoſſible things, the country univerſally believed, that it was then the precedent was given of negociations with parties, oppoſed to negociations with the people, through the organ of the Executive power? Ruſſia, indeed, had no Convention to record or applaud ſuch negociations, but the injury to the Conſtitution would have been the ſame. You are too much verſed in the hiſtory of nations not to know that it is an injury of the moſt fatal kind to the purity and the ſafety of a popular government.

You conclude your letter by a confident appeal to your conſtituents on the uprightneſs of your intentions, "that even if your reaſonings ſhould fail of convincing *them*, yet if they believe that ſuch reaſonings, and not any ſiniſter motive, actuated *you*, you have gained the cauſe which you have argued before them." The people, Sir, have not time to untwiſt the ſubtilty, or to detect the ſophiſm of argument; 'tis from the tenor of a man's actions they decide on his motives, and they have not been inattentive to yours. In queſtions of ſuch moment,

ment, a public man ſhould be very ſure of his reaſoning, before he hazards opinions that involve the internal peace, the union, and the dignity of his country. You tell us, that you deliberated with yourſelf, that you conſulted with your friends. Of the powers of your own mind we know the extent, though we have been frequently obliged to regret the miſapplication. The advice of your friends we were alſo diſpoſed to eſtimate at no common rate; but, on this occaſion, Sir, we find it on the oppoſite ſide of the account. Some of your friends, indeed, ſince you will have us call them ſo, are of your opinion, but they are not exactly thoſe to whoſe wiſdom we ſhould have firſt reſorted for advice. "Friendſhip," ſays the Poet, "is the wine of life." I fear, Sir, that, in this particular caſe, the wine was drawn off, and the lees, alas! were all you had left.

Though your letter is leſs animated, on the whole, than we ſhould have looked for on ſuch a queſtion; though there is an air of deſpondency in it, which your exertions commonly throw off; and though I feel for the confeſſion which it makes, of your being "pitied for your ſuppoſed miſconduct by ſome of your friends, renounced by others, attacked and miſrepreſented by your enemies;" yet, in

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one paſſage, you reſume the wonted ſpirit of your eloquence, and apoſtrophize, with ironical ſeverity, the romance of the cruſaders, and the madneſs of Don Quixote. But the figure is loſt in the application. No man is fool enough to think of the conqueſt of France; 'tis to reſiſt her conqueſts that Britain is compelled to arm. The cruſade, the chivalry, the Quixotiſm is her's; ſhe battles againſt what the Convention calls *eſtabliſhed caſts* and *conſtituted authorities*. She will not ſuffer the people of any other country to be happy; ſhe will compel them to be free. This is madneſs, but not what Cervantes painted in his Hero. Cervantes drew him gentle, benevolent, and virtuous; a lover of order, the friend of humanity. The Quixotiſm of France is armed againſt the peace of the world; her friendſhip is anarchy, her fraternity is pillage, her reſentment is murder.

Such is the national ſpirit, and the national conduct which Britain is called on to oppoſe. When fairly ſtated, I think we cannot doubt the juſtice of our cauſe. You ſeem to doubt the extent of our reſources, and warn us of the burthens which war impoſes. Thoſe burthens it were certainly deſireable to avoid; but if they are the neceſſary means of purchaſing future proſperity and peace, we will bear them

without repining. The flood has come to us, and we muſt ſtop its progreſs, or be overwhelmed in its courſe. If the mound by which we oppoſe it take ſomething from our eſtate, it is the price we pay for the ſecurity of what remains. The induſtry and the genius of this country can ſoon repair the waſte of wealth; but what could reſtore her ſullied honour, her broken faith, her violated Conſtitution?

BRUTUS.

18 FEBRUARY
1793.